

Message Text

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73

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-11 /081 W
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R 220637Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5228

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

USINT BAGHDAD

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IR

SUBJ: BIG GUNS BROUGHT TO BEAR ON CONTROVERSY OVER NAME
OF PERSIAN GULF

REF: TEHRAN 0507

1. IN INTERVIEW WITH KUWAITI JOURNALIST WHICH WAS CARRIED ON
FRONT PAGES OF FARSI AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE PRESS UNDER
BANNER HEADLINES JANUARY 21, SHAH WARNED THAT IRAN WOULD NOT
RETREAT "ONE SINGLE STEP" ON QUESTION OF PERSIAN GULF'S NAME.
IN RESPONSE TO REPEATED QUESTIONS ON CONTROVERSY BY AHMED JAROLLAH,
PUBLISHER OF KUWAIT'S AL SIYASSAH, SHAH SCATHINGLY
CRITICIZED ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE "UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED HISTORICAL
NAME," SAYING THAT IF ALLOWED TO SUCCEED OTHER COUNTRIES MIGHT
WELL TRY TO CHANGE NAME OF INDIAN OCEAN TO "AFRICAN OCEAN" OR
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"INDONESIAN OCEAN." HE PUT BLAME ON ARAB STATES FOR STARTING

CONTROVERSY AND SAID THEY WERE ONES WHO WOULD SUFFER CONSEQUENCES IF THEY DID NOT FIND SOLUTION. HE REJECTED JAROLLAH'S SUGGESTION THAT WATERWAY BE NAMED SIMPLY "GULF" OR "GOLDEN GULF." IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, SHAH SAID MILITARY MANEUVERS HELD LAST WEEK IN IRAN HAD NO CONNECTION WHATEVER WITH THIS ISSUE AND HAD BEEN SCHEDULED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO.

2. ON JANUARY 19, THREE SENATORS MADE STRONG SPEECHES IN OPEN SESSION CONDEMNING ATTITUDE OF ARAB COUNTRIES IN THIS MATTER AND ASSERTING SUCH ATTEMPTS WOULD NOT SUCCEED IN CHANGING ANYTHING. AS ONE SENATOR WAS SPEAKING, FONMIN KHALATBARY ENTERED CHAMBER TO INTRODUCE NEW MFA UNDERSEC FOR POLITICAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, NASSIR ASSAR. KHALATBARY THANKED SENATORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND TOLD THEM INCIDENT HAD BEEN UNFORTUNATE MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH WAS NOW CLEARED UP.

3. COMMENT: HEAD OF MFA'S 4TH POLITICAL DEPT, AFTER CHECKING WITH UNDERSEC ASSAR, TOLD POLCOUNS SITUATION HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED TO EXTENT IMPLIED BY KHALATBARY'S COMMENT TO SEDATE.

ALL COUNTRIES INVOLVED HAD EXPRESSED REGRET AT CONTRETEMPS BUT ONLY A FEW HAD ASSURED GOI THEY WOULD NOT SUPPORT CONTINUED EFFORT TO GIVE NEWS AGENCY UNACCEPTABLE NAME. GOI, HOWEVER, HOPES ARABS WILL LET PROPOSAL DROP.

4. ASSERTIONS BY SHAH AND GOI THAT COMPROMISE USING MORE NEUTRAL TERM "GULF" WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE ARE PUZZLING, SINCE WORKING COMPROMISE ON THIS ISSUE ALREADY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN REACHED DURING REGIONAL FISHING CONFERENCE IN QATAR IN APRIL 1975 (DOHA 492). SHAH AND GOI MAY MEAN THEY WOULD CATEGORICALLY OPPOSE ACTUAL RENAMING OF WATERWAY, EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT CLOSE EYES TO INFORMAL USE OF "GULF" TO REDUCE TENSIONS IN CONFERENCES WHERE BOTH ARABS AND IRANIANS ARE PARTICIPATING.

5. ON JANUARY 20 GOI SENT NEW AMBASSADOR KHERADMEH TO MUSCAT AFTER OMANI FONMIN HAD ASSURED IRANIANS HIS COUNTRY WOULD NOT SUPPORT PROPOSAL TO USE "ARABIAN GULF" IN NAME OF NEWS AGENCY. IRANIAN AMBASSADORS TO OTHER SIX COUNTRIES WILL APPARENTLY REMAIN IN TEHRAN FOR TIME BEING.
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